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GENERAL GRANT'S LETTERS TO A FRIEND, 1862-1880.—II.

WITH AN INTRODUCTION AND NOTES BY GENERAL JAMES GRANT
WILSON.

XI.

17, Cavendish Square, June 9th, 1877.

My stay in London has been more protracted than I had intended, or will be before my accepted engagements are fulfilled. I have accepted invitations for every day up to and including the 26th of this month. On the 28th of June I will be at a banquet to be given in Liverpool. Within a few days of that time, most likely on the 1st day of July, I will be in Paris on my way to Switzerland. My stay will probably not reach more than a day or two beyond the 4th of July in Paris. The reception I have had in England so far has been very gratifying and I think very complimentary to our country. I recognize the fact that it is more for the country all the compliments I am receiving are intended than for me personally.

I will send my courier to Paris to secure quarters for our short stay, or will get General Torbett to do this for me. I will be compelled to be very moderate in my expenditures to correspond with my means. In fact the extent of my visit abroad will depend entirely on how long I can stay upon the limited capital I have brought with me.

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XII.

PARIS, France, October 7th, 1878.

I am just in receipt of your very welcome letter of the 23d of September. I have no recollection of receiving a letter from you written about the time of your departure from Paris. I am sure I should have answered had such a letter reached me. The last communication I remember anything of was either a letter or despatch—the latter I think—received by me at Frankfort, in answer to mine stating the time I would remain there. I was very sorry not to meet you there.

As you say, it is bliss to be out of the United States just at a time when all the bad elements in the country are seemingly carrying everything before them. It is to be hoped, and I think confidently to be relied upon, that all the isms will have run their course before 1880. It is incomprehensible that men—not to say a majority—could be found who are willing to upset the country financially just at a time when we have got so near to specie payments, when we have established the highest credit known among nations, and when general prosperity to the country is just dawning. The whole Democratic party cried itself hoarse over the outrage upon the Constitution when the nation, in its desperation, adopted the “legal tender note.” Every Democratic Judge upon the Supreme bench, I believe, gave a judicial opinion against the constitutionality of the act and every Republican member of the Court sustained it only on the ground of imperative necessity, a means to save the nation’s life, on the ground of self-defence and self-preservation justifying the means. Now the whole party seems to be willing to issue an unlimited quantity of this money in spite of their previous declaration, in spite of the solemn promise that above a certain amount—400,000,000—should not be issued, in spite of the solemn obligation that those issued should be redeemed in coin, understood at the time to be gold coin. I believe I am right in this statement of the views of the Supreme Court on the money question. . . .

We leave here in a few days for Spain and Portugal. When we have visited those countries we will have been in every country in Europe, and a little of Africa and Asia. I have enjoyed it all very much, but often feel homesick to get back. If I should go back now, however, I would have no home to go to. In the spring

I would have my Long Branch home, where I could stay through the summer and make arrangements for the winter. Mrs. Grant joins me in kindest regards to Mrs. Washburne and the children, as well as to yourself. I will always be glad to hear from you, and hope I shall not prove negligent in answering.

XIII.

PARIS, FRANCE, December 24th, 1878.

Your very welcome letter of November the 24th was awaiting me here on my return to Paris some ten days since. I was very glad to hear from you again, but sorry to hear the cause of the detention of your family East this winter. I hope your daughter is improving and that she will soon be restored to entire health.

You have seen by the papers that I have determined to go home by India, China, and Japan. This will not probably delay my return, but it will land me in San Francisco about the time I expected to reach Philadelphia—say the last of June. If we get to San Francisco as early as that or nearly so, I shall want to remain on the Pacific coast six weeks or two months. I spent two years there in early life and always felt the greatest desire to make it my future home. Nothing ever fell over me like a wet blanket so much as my promotion to the Lieutenant-Generalcy. As junior Major-General in the regular Army I thought my chances good for being placed in command of the Pacific Division when the war closed. As Lieutenant-General all hope of that kind vanished. You wrote me that you had been all over the Pacific coast before and how much interested you were in that country.

I anticipate great pleasure from the trip before me. The fact is I take much more interest in seeing countries but seldom visited by foreigners than in seeing those where one comes but little in contact with others than those foreign to the soil visited. I shall endeavor to profit by the journey, even if I should write nothing. So far I have abstained from giving my views about the institutions and people of the countries I have already visited. The fact is, however, that I have seen nothing to make me regret that I am an American. Our country, its resources, the energy, ingenuity, and intelligence of the people, etc., is more appreciated abroad than at home. If our politicians and people could see us as others see us, and see how much better off all pro-

ducing classes are with us than in the most favored nation of Europe, they would have much less to complain of and more to be thankful for.

I am much pleased with the result of the November elections. It seems to me to put the Republican party right for 1880. Providence seems to direct that something should be done just in time to save the party of progress and national unity and equality. The Potter investigating committee and the financial question did it the last time.

XIV.

SINGAPORE, STRAITS SETTLEMENTS, April 4th, 1879.

Since my last letter to you I have seen much of the world new to me, and but little visited by our countrymen. The reality is different from my anticipations as to climate, characteristics of the natives, the governments that have been forced upon them, etc., etc. My idea had been rather that English rule in this part of the globe was purely selfish, all for the benefit of "Old England" and pampered sons sent here to execute laws enacted at home, and nothing for the benefit of the governed. I will not say that I was all wrong, but I do say that Englishmen are wise enough to know that the more prosperous they can make the subject the greater consumer he will become, and the greater will be the commerce and trade between the home government and the colony, and greater the contentment of the governed. This quarter is governed on this theory, and, as far as my opportunities have given me the power to judge, by a most discreet, able, and well-chosen set of officials. My opinion is that if the English should withdraw from India and the East, they would scarcely get off the soil before the work of rapine and murder and wars between native chiefs would begin. The retrograde to absolute barbarism would be more rapid than progress toward civilization is possible; it would be almost instantaneous. As Mr. Young, who is traveling with me, gives accurate and detailed accounts of every place we visit, and all we see, nothing of this sort is necessary from me. I keep somewhat careful notes, however—have since leaving Paris for the East—but doubt whether I shall ever use them further than for my own reference.

The weather is getting very warm in this section, and we must expect a good deal of it before we get to a cool climate. In

a few days we start for Bangkok, Siam, and return here—within a degree of the equator—to take steamer for Hong-Kong. I shall then visit Chinese ports as far north as Shanghai, and possibly go to Pekin before visiting Japan. It looks now as if we would reach San Francisco as early as August. I am both homesick and dread going home. I have no home, but must establish one after I get back. I do not know where.

XV.

GOVERNMENT HOUSE, HONG KONG, May 4, 1879.

I am just in receipt of your letter of the 4th of February from San Antonio. I was in San Antonio in December, 1845, when it was but little else than a Mexican town and isolated from all settlements. From Corpus Christi to San Antonio there was not a family except a few Mexican settlers along the San Antonio River for some miles below the town. From there to Austin there was not a habitation except at New Bensfelt, which had been colonized, I think, that year.

We are now on the homestretch, letters going much quicker to America by the East than by the West. Up to this time myself and party have had the same hearty welcome and kind hospitalities as we experienced throughout India. It promises to be the same thing through China and Japan. At this place I have received official notification from both governments of their desire to make my stay among them as pleasant as possible. This is really the most beautiful place I have yet seen in the East. The city is admirably built and the scenery is most picturesque. The harbor is made by the irregular high land on the main shore and innumerable islands coming up out of the sea and rising to a height of from 500 to 1,700 feet above. We go to-morrow to Canton, thence to Shanghai and Pekin. On the way we will make short stops at several China sea ports. I expect to reach Yokohama about the last of June, and San Francisco late in August. I expect to remain on the Pacific for some weeks and then to go to Galena to remain until the weather gets cold. Where we will spend the winter I have not determined. We may go to Florida and Havana.

XVI.

NIKKO, JAPAN, July 23, 1879.

Some weeks since I received your letter written after you had

received mine from Bombay. You had not received one from me written after your suggestion had been received to go to Galena on my return home. I answered that letter, saying that I should go there, and presume you received it after yours was written. Lest you may not have received it, however, I repeat that it has been my intention to go to Galena on my return.

Since my last to you I have visited the principal seacoast cities in China, and Pekin in the interior, and have now been nearly a month in this most interesting country and among these interesting people. China stands where she did when her ports were first open to foreign trade. I think I see dawning, however, the beginning of a change. When it does come China will rapidly become a powerful and rich nation. Her territory is vast and is full of resources, agricultural, mineral; iron, coal, copper, silver and gold, besides nearly every other metal, abound as they do with us. The population is industrious, frugal, intelligent, and quick to learn. They are natural artisans and tradesmen. From Bombay to Hong Kong they monopolize all the trades—mechanical—the market gardening, trucking, stevedoring, small shopkeeping, etc., and are rapidly driving out the larger merchants. They cannot do so well, however, in their own country. They must have the protection of a better and more honest government to succeed. Neither the country, cities, nor people present attractions to invite the traveller to make a second visit. Japan is different. The country is beautiful beyond description. Every street and every house is as clean as they can be made. Good water prevails everywhere and it is freely used. The progress that has been made in the last dozen years is almost inconceivable. Free schools abound all over the land, giving facilities for every child, male and female, to get a fair education. Attendance is almost compulsory between certain ages. In the cities they have academies, colleges and normal schools, both to prepare males and females. It has been my privilege to visit at Tokio (Yeddo) their military and naval academies, their School of Science, their college, their normal school for young ladies, a very large school for children, taught by female teachers prepared at the normal school and other places of learning. The two former compare very well with our own military and naval academies in course taught; discipline, drill, and progress of the students. A student to enter the School of Science must be a good English

scholar, and after entering all his text books and recitations are in English.

The course is six years, the last two in application of what they learned in the first four. A portion of each year—taking the place of vacation with us—is also spent in the workshops making parts of machinery, models of engines, of looms, machinery for spinning and weaving, etc., etc. Many of their teachers are natives, though the studies are in English. It will be but a few years before they will be able to dispense with foreign instruction entirely.

We leave for home by the “City of Tokio,” which will sail from Yokohama about the 27th of August. I shall be glad to be settled down at home. . . .

I forgot to mention that students to enter the college must study English five years first, making a nine-year course. Here, too, they have one or two native professors.

XVII.

ST. AUGUSTINE, FLA., Jan. 18, 1880.

I wrote you a hasty letter from Philadelphia, but do not know whether you received it. Our trip through the South has been so far without an incident to mar the pleasure of it. All the way from Washington the people of all classes and colors were at the stations to meet the train and to extend invitations for myself and party to stop and accept their hospitalities. The business boom has reached the South, and the people are beginning to feel much better contented in consequence. I am very much pleased with Florida. The winter climate is perfection and I am told by Northern men settled here that the summers are not near so hot here as in the North, though of longer continuance. This State has a great future before it. It has the capacity to raise all the sugar and semi-tropical fruits the whole country needs besides supplying vast amounts of timber, early vegetables, nice material for paper, rope, bagging, coarse matting, etc. It affords the best opening to be found in any country for young men of little means but full of energy, industry, and patience. The impetus given already will supply in a few years all the semi-tropical fruits required by the country. What is now wanted is the establishment of moderate sugar mills over the country to buy all the sugar cane small farmers will furnish. The State is

underlayed and has around it deposits of valuable fertilizers sufficient for many generations. If you do not join me in Cuba I hope you will come here to spend March and April. I do not doubt but you would receive much benefit from the visit.

I will sail from Cedar Keys for Havana on the 20th. The Secretary of the Navy has placed at Havana a vessel at my command. I think I shall make an excursion to Hayti, St. Domingo, Porto Rico and Jamaica, and swing around by Yucatan, so as to reach Vera Cruz about the 15th of February. When I return it will be by the way of Galveston and Denver. At the latter place and in Colorado generally I expect to stop until the weather is pleasant in Galena, say about the 10th of May. I shall be very much pleased to meet you in Havana and have you go on this trip to the West Indies, if you are sailor enough to enjoy the excursion.

XVIII.

HAVANA, CUBA, February 2d, 1880.

Your letter of the 25th of January is just received. The same mail brings New York papers of the 29th, by which I see you were in that city at that time. Your letter directed to me in Washington City was received there, but I neglected to mention it. I see by the papers the same that you mention about * * * * *. I predict that it will do him no good, and as far as it may affect me I care nothing about it. All that I want is that the government rule should remain in the hands of those who saved the Union until all the questions growing out of the war are forever settled. I would much rather any one of many I could mention should be President than that I should have it. On that subject I stand just as I told you in Chicago. I shall not gratify my enemies by declining what has not been offered. I am not a candidate for anything, and if the Chicago convention nominates a candidate that can be elected, it will gratify me, and the gratification will be greater if it should be some one other than myself. In confidence I will tell you I should feel sorry if it should be * * * * *. Blaine, I would like to see elected, but I fear the party could not elect him. He would create enthusiasm, but he would have opposition in his own party that might lose him some Northern States that the Republicans should carry.

My reception here has been more than cordial by both officials and the people. The weather is sultry, just such as we run from at home in the dog days. If this winter is a sample, Florida is a much better winter resort.

Please present Mrs. Grant's and my best regards to Mrs. Washburne and your family, with the same to yourself. I shall be pleased to hear from you in the City of Mexico.

XIX.

GALVESTON, Texas, March 25th, 1880.

Your letter of the 11th of February only reached Mexico by the mail but one before my departure. I was away from the City of Mexico at the time on an excursion to the Rio Del Monte Silver mines, and did not return until after the departure of the steamer bringing it. Yours of the 26th of February was taken by the steamer on which I returned. There was no opportunity of answering either, therefore earlier, or so that you could receive it earlier than by writing from here.

In regard to your suggestion that I should authorize some one to say that in no event would I consent to ever being a candidate after 1880, I think any statement from me would be misconstrued and would only serve as a handle for my enemies. Such a statement might well be made after the nomination if I am nominated in such a way as to accept. It is a matter of supreme indifference to me whether I am or not. There are many persons I would prefer should have the office to myself. I owe so much to the Union men of the country that if they think my chances are better for election than for other probable candidates in case I should decline, I cannot decline if the nomination is tendered without seeking on my part.

Mexico shows many signs of progress since I was there thirty-two years ago. Railroads are pushing out slowly from the capital and with every advance greater prosperity and employment for the poor follow. I think it should be the policy of our government now to cultivate the strongest feelings of friendship between the people of the two Republics. Soon we will have railroad connection between the two countries, and our people will begin to mix and become better acquainted. Mexico can, and will, raise all the tropical and semi-tropical products which we now buy from countries that take nothing from us in ex-

change, except sterling exchange, and will take from us in return the products of our manufacturers. Americans are beginning now to work their mines. Soon they will be cultivating their sugar, coffee, and tobacco plantations, running their factories, doing their banking, etc. I go to San Antonio for a day or two, thence to New Orleans, and up the river to Memphis. I will probably run over to Hot Springs from the latter to absorb time until the weather in Galena gets pleasant. I do not care to arrive there before the first of May.